Which Gear Should I Use?

Making Decisions Using the Two Gear Method

Little Gear

For quick decisions that we make everyday without thinking about it — like brushing our teeth — we use the little gear.

These are decisions that require no conscious thought or energy, and are made quickly.

The little gear keeps us from being overwhelmed by too much information. Its job is to focus and filter based on what we already know. But that also means it can lead to mistakes when we encounter new situations. Snap judgments based on limited information lead to errors and bias. And that can be a problem if you are using your little gear for people decisions.

Examples:
- What to wear
- What route to take to work
- What podcast to listen to
- Where to go to lunch
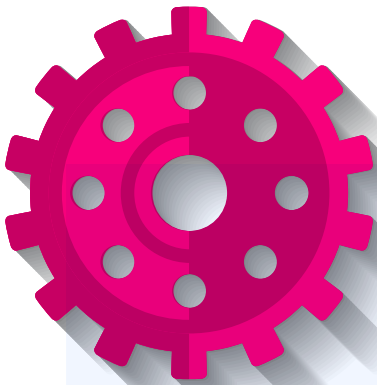
Big Gear

For important decisions that have greater consequences, we need to slow down and use our big gear. This applies to decisions that affect other people, processes, etc.

When we use our big gear we are more likely to make better decisions with more favorable outcomes.

Our big gear requires intentional reasoning. It takes time and effort. Big gear thinking means thinking critically.

Examples:
- Any evaluation processes such as who to hire or who gets promoted
- Which projects are priorities
- Who are the stakeholders for a project

Use your big gear by asking questions like:
- Who or what does this decision effect?
- What specific facts and information am I using?
- What am I leaving out?
- Where did I get this information?
- Who does this information advantage?
- Who is disadvantaged?
- What are the consequences of not thinking things through?

Does the decision affect other people?

YES? → BIG GEAR

NO? → Does the decision have a significant or long lasting impact?

YES? → BIG GEAR

NO? → LITTLE GEAR